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Otley (R)

WILLIAM THE NORMAN,

OR THE

TYRANT DISPLAYED.

A TRAGEDY.

BY R. OTLEY,

When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood; kingly glare
Will loose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; *whilst falsehood's trade*
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

SHELLEY.

Sheffield:

PRINTED BY WALKER & KING, HIGH-STREET. PUBLISHED BY J. WATSON, NO. 5 PAUL'S ALLEY, PATERNOSTER ROW; AND H. BEAL, NO. 2, SHOE LANE, LONDON, AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1848.

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PREFACE.

William the Norman, the founder, as historians would persuade us, of the reigning dynasty of England, was one of the most ferocious, subtle and cruel tyrants, of any age or country. His father was Duke of Normandy, his mother a tanner's daughter of Falaise, whose name was Arlotte, who attracted his fathers attention as a dancing girl, and whose reputation was not distinguished for chastity. From this stock the English nation derived a *race of Kings,* and *prostitutes* the royal name of *harlots.* He was of a bold and ambitious disposition; once in power, his lust, avarice, and sanguinary temperament, knew and acknowledged no restraints, either human or divine. Virtue, humanity and religion were alike unknown to him, as they were foreign to his nature. He united with the *mean cunning* and ruffianly bravado of the lowest and basest specimens of our species, an aptness and promptitude for military enterprise; the end however always justified the means; fraud, falsehood or hypocrisy,—sanctity, devotion, and religion were equally indifferent to him, so that they only crowned his ambition with success.

United with the Catholic priesthood, the sword of the spirit, priestly domination over an imbecile and credulous people, were equally the instruments of his conquest of this Island, as the power and valour of his troops. The latter were an assemblage of brigands, common thieves, assassins and murderers, from all parts of Europe; these were the founders of the present dynasty, and progenitors of the English aristocrasy,—the Norman priesthood leagued themselves with these men, and this most execrable tyrant, that they might subjugate a free people, plunder and slaughter them, and then secure to themselves no small portion of the spoils. In their combined strength, they laid waste whole provinces, stripped individuals of their wealth and possessions, plundered villages and cities,—entered with violence sacred temples and churches,—rifled them of their holy vessels of gold and silver,—drove the English priesthood from their lands, devoted, as they were, to charity and the service of *Religion*. There is no crime, vice, or cruelty, which men in combined strength can perpetrate against unprotected weakness, which was not inflicted upon the unoffending English. To delineate the characters of some of these men, particularly of the crafty tyrant himself, is the design of the following tragedy.

That sycophant and apologist of kings, Hume, states, that the wisdom of the institutions of this brutal tyrant, is proved by their continuing in full vigour to

this day. But they are and were not the institutions of this anointed savage; they were those of the age, for he had neither wisdom nor humanity, nor religion. The descendants of this barbarian stock have been in every way worthy of their progenitor; many of them have either been descendants of bastards or harlots, or propagators of new races of that species, as if their only ambition had been to do honour, by this means, to their founder and forefather. And if the Divinity takes cognizance of the affairs of man, he has specially and signally proved his abhorance of this infamous race, and their impious founder;—in the first place he died hated, execrated, and deserted by all men, especially of the English; and whilst living, his unnatural sons sought the life of their more unnatural father. William Rufus was a scoffer at religion, a libertine, and in the prime of life was shot by an arrow in one of the royal forests, of which his father had robbed the rightful possessors; this, according to priestly doctrines was a just retribution upon the son for the sins of the father, or perhaps for his own, for he left behind him a great number of natural children. Richard, another son of the first William, lost his life in the same forest. Henry the first, also left behind him many natural children, we may suppose in honour of his grandmother *Miss Harlot;* of those handed down to posterity, seven sons and seven daughters. Towards this man the divine displeasure was fatally manifested by the drowning his legitimate offspring

as they were crossing over from Normandy to England. What awful providential dispensations!!! Steven was harassed with civil wars during his whole reign, and when peace was established, died of over eating like a vulgar glutton. He had only one natural child to ennoble nobility. Henry the second, having a natural affection for *Harlots*, handed down to him by his predecessors, married the wife of a French King, divorced for having too close an intimacy with an infidel Turk. He had acknowledged concubines, Rosamond, by whom he had two sons, William Longsword Earl of Salisbury, and Gregory, first Bishop of Lincoln, promoted afterwards to be Archbishop of York. The other was the prostituted wife of a Knight, Ralph Blewet, who gave to her lord and king a son, who was to have been consecrated a Bishop, but the Pope refused. Thus has nobility and the Church been sanctified to the vices of royalty. The children of this Henry the second, true to their blood, conspired against the life of their father, who died of grief when the plot was discovered and made known to him. Richard the first sold his lands in England, that he might make war upon the infidels and recover the Holy Land; on his return, to sanctify this religious service, he re-took possession of these lands without returning the purchase money to the owners. He died from the effects of a wound in the arm, inflicted by an arrow; He handed down to posterity many natural children, but the number is unknown. By what

pretence these men set up a claim to superior, royal blood, is, has been, and for ever will remain a mystery.

Thus the divine vengeance, in the most awful dispensations pursued the descendants of this ruthful despot. When heavy afflictions fall upon an oppressed and injured people, such as famine, pestilence or war, the hired priesthood proclaimed them to be special dispensations of providence; but when the most direful evils fall upon the most wicked and vicious princes and kings, in opposition to their own creeds, this hired priesthood translate them from crowns filled with thorns, to crowns of glory; thus giving, what should be the highest sanctions of virtue and piety, to the most morally base and depraved of mankind.

It will not be necessary, nor will it comport with the nature of this work to which this preface is introductory, to pursue the unbroken line of kingly descent, from the Norman maurauder to the present day. A few more however, of the most distiuguished for the infamy of their lives, and for the unmitigated evil they have inflicted upon the British people, will not be altogether uninteresting to the reader. John, who succeeded Richard, was one of the most cowardly and treacherous of the race; he was most distinguished for an excess of those royal qualities, imbecility, faithlessness, and cruelty;—was rather the plunderer and devastator of this country than its governor, for the people were plundered by two contending armies during the whole of his reign. Some

historians inform us, that he was poisoned by a monk, others that he was carried off by a disease of the bowels, caused by eating and drinking too much, a truly royal acquirement and termination of life. During the two following reigns, war continued to rage with unabating fury; indeed the march of the tyrant is always strewed with the carcasses of the dead. One of these, Edward the First stripped his subjects of their property without their consent or the least pretence of law. If no other king had ever held supreme authority in this Island, his example is such as to create an universal and eternal hatred to this false and glittering dignity. Majesty and slavery are always united together by an indissoluble link. Like an armed brigand he fell foul upon Jews, the Clergy, upon the towns and the nobility, and seized the property of all, for his own purposes, indiscriminately. He murdered (commonly called executed) nearly three hundred Jews and appropriated their wealth to his own use; year after year he robbed the clergy of a tenth or a fifteenth of their incomes; sometimes besides seized the eleventh part of their moveables; fined them one hundred thousand pounds with numerous other acts of oppression of this description; and if they refused to pay, he placed them as a body out if the pale of the protection of the law. He also fined all the judges, (who might merit the punishment) not to protect the people, but to enrich himself. Later on in his reign he banished fifteen thousand Jews,

that he might possess their riches. Besides all this he instituted inquiries into the means by which land owners became possessed of their lands, and on the merest pretence sold them to enrich himself. After all this he levyed another tax of a thirteenth part of the incomes of the clergy and laity. Indeed the whole property of the kingdom lay prostrate at his feet, as it always has done at those of his successors. What an humiliating condition for the people of any country to submit to, especially when they have imagined themselves to be free!

Perhaps there is not, in connection with any established government, another such an example in history as this man, Edward the first; even the sacred property of the priesthood had no protection from his avarice. In his first year he appropriated to his own use one tenth of their incomes. In the fifth of his reign he seized one twelfth of their property;—again in the eleventh year he took from them one twelfth of their goods; in the nineteenth, an eleventh part of their moveable property, and immediately after, a tenth of their incomes for six years. In his twentieth year he stripped the churches and religious houses, of whatever he could convert into money; and seized all Prior Aliens into his own hands, with all their wealth. He also borrowed one hundred thousand pounds of three Bishops and possessed himself of one fifth of their goods, with the whole property of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and

of all the monasteries of his Diocese. After this the Abbots and Priests gave the fourth part of their wealth to regain the tyrant's favour; not satisfied with this, in his twenty-sixth year, he demanded one penny out of every tenth of the clergy of the diocese of Canterbury, and one out of every fifth of that of York. Did the people of this or any other country or age ever commit such spoilation upon the ministers of religion or the church, as this one man, in the brief space of a single reign?

To the above robberies may be added those he perpretrated upon the other portions of the English nation. The chief justice of the time he fined 7,000 marks; another of the judges 44,000; and the other judges and law officers severally in smaller sums, amounting to 21,000 marks. Of the civilians he seized in his first year, a fifteenth of all their possessions; and in the eleventh, a thirteenth. In the thirteenth year of his reign he fined all who desired to be free from military service, forty shillings; and tradesmen under pretence of false weights one thousand marks. Previons to this he issued a Quo Warranto, to inquire by what tenure men held their lands, and very naturally gave instructions that most of it should fall to himself. At the same time he decreed that the eight part of the goods of all towns, including the revenues of the clergy, should be paid into the treasury; and in his twenty-fifth year, that one ninth of all incomes should be devoted to the king's service. So

that income taxes were as convenient and available in the earlier ages as they have been in more modern times; and with the same design, to oppress and enslave the people.

There are many illustrious examples of royal criminals, of revolting character. Men whose histories have besmeared the pages of the annals of the past with the blood of their innocent victims. Of the possible crimes and follies of which human nature is capable, all have disfigured or rendered monstrously ridiculous the crowns of kings. The Hindoos, who worship images of gods of every conceivable deformity and unnatural shape, appear to hold up to the execratious of the reasoning portions of mankind the mental deformities and the unnatural crimes of princes. If this be true, how those, who can read the arcana of mythology, must laugh at the foibles and follies of mankind; whilst the philosopher and philanthrophist must grieve in secret over the incurable vanity and insanity of one portion of our species, and over the brute-like ignorance and servile submission of the other. Amongst these monstrosities of royalty we find some more pre-eminent than others, as Henry the eighth; the Queens Elizabeth and Mary, and that polished and heartless libertine George the fourth, whose history is sufficiently known.

With respect to the tragedy, to which the above is rather a non-poetical introduction, I have little to say.

The personages are delineated and coloured as they are to be met with in history; the language is that of the authors; but many of the sentiments and articles of faith are not his; but are peculiar to the age and the personages who are made to speak them. The Monk Robert and the royal Savage are truthful portraitures of priests and kings in general, in all ages and in all countries, only the times and manners were more rude; cunning and violence were not so much and so artfully concealed under so polished an exterior as in more modern times.—In the reign of the Norman William, some hundreds of thousands of the industrious peasants of England were driven into the fin-lands of Lincolnshire and perished of cold and hunger; in the reign of Victoria the first and last, several hundred thousand of Irish peasants, surrounded by wealth, civilization, and religious devotion, have died in one year from the same causes. The worthless splendour of palaces and thrones have always been accompanied with the sighs of sorrow and the death groans of the unoffending and industrious people.

Since writing the above, the French people have presented to all the nations of Europe and the world, a glorious example; they have planted the standard of liberty over the ashes of a throne. This movement is a beacon of warning to the people of all other kingdoms and states; the popular will, like an earthquake, has

shaken to the foundation every existing despotism. Eternal fame to the men who have destroyed a throne, and have spread universal joy throughout the human race. There is a bright morning of happiness dawning for the hitherto despised and oppressed family of man. The following Address was written, for the purpose of congratulating the French people on their unexampled victory over a wiley and cold blooded despot.

THE ADDRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD,

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF FRANCE.

"HEROIC FRENCHMEN,

Your three days revolution, achieved with such bravery, and crowned with such moderation and humanity, has filled the British people with the highest degree of confidence, and hope for the future, you were in the most abject state of slavery,—you have burst the fetters with which you were bound and you are free! The serf population of Britain and of all Europe unite their hearts and voices to celebrate your unequalled and magnificent victory. The people of all England deeply and unitedly sympathize with you;—both nations, in the people, have a oneness of soul. The British love *liberty* as their constitutional right, you have won it by your patriotism and bravery as your natural right; and it is our most ardent wish, that you and your children may be free and great, throughout all succeeding generations.

PATRIOTIC FRENCHMEN,

Crowns, in past ages, have glittered, overawed, and charmed away the senses and the reason of mankind; but the unmitigated and unceasing oppressions,—the insufferable arrogance and viciousness, and the unbounded cruelties, in peace and in war, of those who have worn them, have sullied their brilliancy, and sunk them beneath the most worthless things amongst mankind. Crowned heads can only be valued by the diamonds and gold that glitters above them, not for what there is in them; rich ermine may envelope their hearts, but *their hearts* are never warmed to human kindness, and have never glowed with pure benevolence; they have ever been distinguished for that perfidy and treachery, for which your just anger and indignation has, we hope for ever, driven them and their minions from your country. They have exalted themselves into Demi-Gods, and have expected you and us to fall down and worship them; but you have demolished the golden Calf, and reared in its place, a temple to reason and to liberty! —May peace reign over your noble country, and spread plenty in the paths of her children, throughout all future generations!

BROTHER FRENCHMEN,

So deeply do the British People sympathize with you, that every movement of your great, and now free nation, is watched with the most intense interest, your complete success we regard and value as much as if it were our own;—your failure would cover this nation with sackcloth and ashes, and the people would grieve and lament for you and for themselves. But no; you cannot,—will not fail; your eventual success shall be as glorious as your recent victory. Tyrants may threaten at a distance, but they will not dare to strike;—they may growl and show their teeth, but they will not dare to bite, for the sword of the newly enfranchised Frenchman will cut both ways, against the enemies

of the free, and for those who are yet enslaved. And when the news of your *National Regeneration* shall reach the ears of the free, brave, and great people on the other side of the Atlantic, every hill and every valley will resound with enthusiastic acclamations, and every heart vibrate with anxious desires for your ultimate and lasting triumph.

FRENCHMEN,

You have won the hearts of the British People. You have opened to them a brilliant prospect in the vista of the future. You will hear, that we are a free people,—our liberty is a mockery, a delusion, a degradation; we live not for ourselves but for others, we are dispised, contemned, and trampled in the dust, by those whom we extravagantly pay to guard and protect us. But in the midst of our increasing toil, our unexampled poverty,—having *no nation, no government, no home,* we fraternize with you, we hail you as brethren, having the same hopes, the same feelings, the same interests. And mark you; though in the house of commons, a branch only of the aristocracy, affect to smile upon you,—it hates you, would delude and betray you; *we know that House to our sorrow and our shame.* Trust not our government, have no faith in tyrants, trust in yourselves, be firm, peaceful, and persevering, and you shall reap prosperity and happiness, as the fruits of your bravery, intelligence and liberty. Your Republic shall be a beacon to all the Nations of the earth, and whilst its light gleams over our hitherto unfortunate Island, we shall have hope that our sufferings and slavery shall have an end, and *that we* and the *French People* shall be bound together, and eventually all the people of Europe, in one indissoluble bound of fraternity, of justice, peace and equality.

Permit us to subscribe ourselves

Yours in Unity and Peace,

THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD.

March 14th, 1848.

Since the above was written, the glorious revolution of February has been sullied by the infatuation of the once oppressed, but newly enfranchised people of Paris. Deluded by the treacherous agents of crowned tyrants, who are malignant luminaries, round whom move every vice, every crime, injustice and cruelty, the Parisians have been goaded on to excesses of which every virtuous and humane man must grieve to hear. These base emissaries are fiting instruments of kings, who have neither hearts, nor minds to devise any thing either virtuous, benevolent, or beneficial to mankind. Under the disguise of religion both kings and priests have consumated dark deeds of iniquity and wickedness, which corrupt and degrade our common nature. The priesthood of France, the once dependents upon the now departed aristocracy and vile court of Louis Philip, have excited onwards the poor ignorant creatures, born and matured of their own system. No government can be good, that needs the support of a priesthood; and no priesthood can be patriotic or moral, that is supported by any government. Neither the word of kings or priests, in the affairs of government are to be relied upon; the former consider oaths only proper to bind down children; and the people as things brought into existence for their pleasure or amusement;—to live or die as they shall will; whilst priests move round crowned heads, the shadows, the ghosts of virtue, or of moral worth, or the mere sem-

blances of charity. Neither do they vary, they are for ever and everywhere the same; kings the centres of evils,—the priests the satelites that move round them, sheding a malignant influence over the destinies of man.

Sheffield, July 1848.

"Et nomen pacis dulce est, et ipsa res salutaris; sed inter pacem et servitutum plurimum interest: pax est tranquilla libertas; servitus malorum omnium postremum, non modo bello, sed morte etiam repellendum."

Cic ora 2 in M Ant.

Even the name of peace is pleasing, and peace herself is salutary; yet between peace and slavery there is a wide difference.

Peace is the tranquillity of liberty ;servitude the worst of all evils, to be repelled not only by force, but by death itself.

Duncan Tran.

WILLIAM THE NORMAN,

OR THE

TYRANT DISPLAYED,

A TRAGEDY.

ACT 1st.

Scene the interior of an Ancient Castle near Dover, looking towards the sea and rising sun.

Enter William Duke of Normandy.

SOLUS.

The future opens to my panting soul,
Within I feel the full prophetic flame,
That future greatness shall attend my race;
This sea-born Isle shall rise in lasting fame;
I and this unborn race shall foremost stand,
As these rocks fix'd amidst the ocean-storm.
Peaceful and bright as yond assending orb,
Which fills me now with strong prophetic hope,
Alone, distinguish'd as that star of day.
Beheld and worshipp'd by the race of man.
Yond sun sometimes arises in dark clouds,
And lightning flash and awful thunders roll,
And fill the feeble mind with dread and awe;—
Thus must we rise, if need be, and the end,
Must be our care, the means must give success,
And sanctify the bold and daring deed.
And is it true that guile defeats the brave,
The subtle snake will sting with certain death?
How much more certain is our end achiev'd
When skill and valour shall direct the plan,
And these work'd out by creed-created fears,

That sieze men's minds, and make them willing slaves,
To bind themselves in serfdom to our will.
The church must *saint* the sword, the sword the church,
By these we win a throne, or die in glorious war.
How peaceful now the dreaded ocean sleeps,
How like a polish'd mirror, is the vast expance,
Ten thousand stars reflected from its face,
The whole an emblem of this slumbering realm,
Edward its sun,—this calm portends a storm!
When weakness falls from greatness to the grave,
'Tis like the falling star, a moment bright,
Then wrapt in darkness, is for ever lost.—
But who comes here? It is indeed the king,
Who plays with pow'r as childhood plays with toys,
And we with him.

Enter King Edward.

DUKE WILLIAM; All hail my royal liege,
This morning bids me welcome to your shore;
Not more so than the friendly, glowing heart,
Of him who rules this fair, illustrious, land,

EDWARD ADVANCES.

There take my hand, and with it my whole soul,
For I have thought and often dream'd of you;
And dreams are sent from him who rules on high,
By whom we hold the sceptre, wear a crown.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Your thoughts devout, become the holy church,
Whose true and faithful sons, we all must be;—

(Aside)

My sovereign power is my faithful sword,
Auspicious dreams, ah! these do augur well

(Places his hand upon his sword.)

By this I'll carve my way up to the throne,
And saints shall be my stepping stone to pow'r.

KING EDWARD.

Yes, true, we must obey, and play our parts,
Mine soon must end, some other star must rise;—
Where shall I turn? where heaven's finger points,
That she and earth in harmony may rule?

DUKE WILLIAM.

The church is holy, heaven speaks thro' her,
Where she directs, or leads, we must obey;
The highest loves sweet peace, and in my heart
I bow to his supreme, and high behest.—
My cousin you did dream, I heard you say,
And dreams are born in heaven, rule on earth,
Did then the light divine, the future show?

KING EDWARD.

O! yes, now I remember (you recall the thought)
I dream'd I saw you seated on my throne;
An halo bright did then surround your brow,
And heaven, I think did then proclaim you king.

DUKE WILLIAM.

My liege 'tis heav'n decrees what'er shall be;
Have you consulted any holy man?
Or does that dream lay in your heart conceal'd,
Just like the seed within our mother earth,
That buds, and grows, and gives the harvest home?

KING EDWARD.

Till now the thought was silent as the grave,
But it shall rise like spirits from the dead,
And immortality shall give to unborn kings.

Exit King Edward.

ENTER MONK ROBERT THE FUTURE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MONK ROBERT.

Long has report spread far abroad your fame,
Your courage and ability in war;
A true and faithful son of mother church,
All welcome to our Isle of wealthy knaves.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Good father have you heard of Edward's dream,
How it portends the enrichment of the church;
The past is but a wilderness, a dearth,—
The future shall be as the land that flows
With milk and honey, rivers of rich wine,
Gold showr'd down by heav'ns all-bountious hand.

MONK ROBERT.

O! your words sound much sweeter, richer far,
Than our full choir of soul stiring sounds;—
Your words are music, of inspiration born,
Some angel whisper'd in your willing ear,
You said my son, O! did you not? just now,
The king has dream'd a heavenly, holy dream.

DUKE WILLIAM.

(Aside)

See; how priests' souls are hook'd in with the bait,
I'll draw them to my purpose in the end.

Duke Willlam continues speaking to the Monk.

O! yes; he had a dream, an heavenly dream,
And saw the royal emblem round this brow,
Yes 'twas but a dream,—sometimes they shadow forth,
Arcana hid in dark futuries' womb.

EXEUNT.

ACT 1st. SCENE 2nd.

An Ancient Mansion on the banks of the Thames near Southwark. The moon declining to the west.

Enter Earl Godwin.

EARL GODWIN.

How chang'd are now, my future hopes and aims,
From what they were, when on my father's flocks
In rustic peace I did attend, or rang'd
The forest ; now my cares are over men.
Ah ! wolves there are in pow'r, I fear not them ;
The brave courts danger, when the prize is great ;
And now 'tis liberty, and wealth, and fame ;
May be a kingdom,---perhaps that thought is vain,
For I am aged,---but then I have a son
And daughter ! whom men have injured much ;
Sneer'd at, imprison'd, by her spouse dispis'd ;
Yet she is lovely and as much becomes a throne,
As yond bright orb, to be the nights' fair queen ;
How silently and peacefully she sails,
And pours a stream of light upon this earth ;
Thus should all power shine forth supreme,
In might, in virtue, dignity of mind,
To illuminate, exalt, to cheer, and fill with joy.---
Hark how the people cheer, it is my son,
The Norman wolves, they dread the hunter's cry ;
I hear, that they have fled their den, the court,
And left the king a prey to discontent.
But he is good, though weak and ill-advised,
He would do good but lacks the might of mind,
To steer the vessel of this rising state
Amidst the shoals and quicksands, rising storms.
The prize is great.---
A sceptre for a lowly shepherd's crook,
But then it is a kingdom or a grave,

The first may come, the last's the fate of all;---
He comes, my pride, and this great nation's hope.

Enter Harold

HAROLD.

Success is ours, our enemies have fled,
And we again our country may embrace;
My life and soul is with you and our race,
On God's just altar sworn the Norman's foe;
All, All! I offer in the name of him
Who sits on high, decrees the fate of man,
And rules great empires and the deeds of kings;
His guardian arm shall the right defend,
And aid the brave, who merit to be free.

Enter QUEEN EDITH, wife of King Edward, and daughter of Godwin.

QUEEN EDITH.

My father, I ceased not to weep for thee,
My harp was silent and I knew no song:
Enclos'd within yond solitary room,
My prayers assended morning noon and night,
To heav'n, for peace, sweet peace, and that my lord,
Directed by the Omnipotence of love,
Might seek thy council, and consult thy heart.

Trumpets sound to arms.

O! Hark; the trumpets sound to arms,
O! Father, brother, husband why thus war,
Are we not one, by nature's hallow'd tie,
The priest of the most high hath bless'd us once,
Why seek ye then, in war, each others death?
Ah! Peace, sweet peace, thou cordial of the soul
And holy unction to the bruis'd in heart.---
He comes! He comes, with anger on his brow,
His step is firm, his hand upon his sword,
And vengeance of the soul darts through his eyes.

Enter King Edward.

KING EDWARD.

Ah! traitors; am I thus hunted as the boar;
Encircled in my den? would you alarm
Or injure, God's anointed, or the nation's head?
Do ye presume on your past martial deeds?
Ah! mind, you may our mercy try too much;
Our filial love may turn to scorching wrath,
And in its course consume my common foes.

HAROLD.

If that were true, then were you wise indeed,
Less dangers spring from the bold lion's roar,
Than from the serpent's silent, stealthy sting;
Or from the deadly poison's cooling draught;
Or from the subtle flatterer's base designs;---
Look there, she's beauty, and chaste love combin'd,
Whose soul's as pure as the crystal light,
Yet you have spurn'd her, drove her from her home.

QUEEN EDITH to her Father and Brother.

The poison's gone, he is again himself
Truth, kindness, virtue, patriotic love,
Make up the ingredients of his noble soul,
Court flatterers breed the virus, that's their food,
Their lust of praise is nautious to the mind,
They're borne on summer's warm congenial breeze,
But when ill-fortune's keen blasts blow, they die,
Or seek a warmer clime, where sun and shade,
Invite their inert souls to dull delights.

The Queen continues and addresses the king.

The past my liege, is past, oblivious as death,
Let us renew conjugal love, husband!
And thou my dauntless, brave chivalrous knight,
Let our pure love in holy censor burn,

In one bright flame ascend to heaven supreme.

Exeunt omnes.

ACT 1st Scene 3rd—A Castle on the sea shore in Normandy.

Enter Duke William.

Solus.

These Buchaneers and warriors must be fed,
And pamper'd, flatter'd, till my purpose's gain'd,
As high bred steeds are to submission coax'd,
Or train'd to martial deeds by skill or force.
The brutes love blood, when gold is the reward,
Like hounds fed by the carrion of their lords;---
With men I hunt, a throne is my high game,
Let all who've taken life, assassins, thieves,
Their country's laws defied, or plung'd in deeds of hell
Around my standard rally,---priests will bless.

Enter Monk Robert.

MONK ROBERT.

Ah! thought again my lord,---deep thought
Sits on your noble brow,---the cares of men,
Of our good Mother Church, press on your soul;
But heav'n shall bless, her faithful son reward;
Have you not heard from yond rich Isle the news?
We've sown dissentions,---Godwin and his son
Are rebels to their liege, this crime would taint,
It would deform the purest saint on high.---
They speak of freedom, and the people's rights;
Ah! freedom is a dangerous theme, a curse;
Of fools the paradise, the dream of mobs;
The hate of priests, of all the good and wise;---
What? should we give the bridle to the steed?
The ship abandon to the wind and waves?
And throw the compass in the ocean's gulf?
No; we must wing the eagle lest he soar,

And pounce upon the royal, sacred, lambs.---
This liberty leads men to think and doubt
The holy functions of the priest and king,
And with dull sceptics, priests would be a scorn,
But with fanatics, wield the pow'r of Gods.

DUKE WILLIAM. Ah!

MONK ROBERT.

With these, in yonder Isle, we are at work,
We will the vagrant shepherds sons subdue.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Whilst you with secret engines are at play,
We must prepare men for the game at war;
Pow'r gives us right o'er men, and wealth, and love,
And what we will, is the behest of heav'n.

Enter Warriors OSBERT, EUSTACE, ERRIC, GURTH.
William advances and salutes them.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Welcome brave Gurth to this our jovial feast,
War's perils ask the pleasures of the cup,
Fair woman's smiles and her deep ardent love;---
The first art thou in battle, fear'st no foe,
And first art thou to feast the soul with wine,
Oft hast thou served thy liege, our faithful church;
True as thy weapon is thy dauntless heart,
For us and them thou'st play'd a valliant part.

GURTH.

My liege, this sword to you was ever true,
To you most holy father is my soul;
You see this weapon's hallow'd by the cross;
And by the tainted blood of faithless men,
By us curs'd heretics are hurl'd to hell,
With rebels vile who dare oppose your will;

And then absolved before the eternal judge,
Devout I wait again your high commands.

ERRIC.

Nor thou my liege, nor this good, honest monk,
'Ere found me less devote than other knights;
My weapon with the purest gold is cross'd,
The sign we bear as token of our love;
In darkest nights or in the open field,
It bears a charm known but to holy men,
Our skill, fidelity. and faith, to night
Shall do your will, and send the damn'd to hell.

MONK ROBERT.

My sons your zeal is worthy your stout hearts,
Angelic aid surrounds and guards your lives;
And each bright deed recorded is on high,
Engraved on crystal by a ray of light.

OSBERT.

But hark ye! wolves this moment cross'd our path,
And dare intrude in this our lion's den;—
The English curs now brave the Norman's wrath,
But 'ere morn dawns, their eyes shall know no light,
Their tongues be silent as the senseless rock.

EUSTACE.

As spies, no doubt, these knights have sought our shore,
This night they cross the Styx and darker shores
explore.

Exeunt Garth, Erric, Osbert, and Eustace.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Sir Monk, these men love blood, have iron hearts,
We need but to command, the deed of death is done;---
The Saxon Harold would be king, or more,
Supreme in yond green Isle o'er church and all,

But we must strike from heav'n this Saxon star,
And rise, the only sun, to rule the day.

Exit Duke William.

MONK ROBERT. *Solus.*

These Knights and Barons, th' mighty of this earth,
Are things we play with, kings play with men,
But we with men and kings,---the priest
Must coil his power around his foe,
As does the serpent 'ere he stings to death.
This wily Duke would scale the walls of light,
Or league himself with our infernal foe;
His soul's ambition, a sceptre is, or grave,
He mounts the altar, to ascend the throne;---
A King is one, no friendly voice is near,
We, bound by hallow'd bonds, a legion,
And wield a ghostly sceptre o'er the soul,
That moves with silent and electric speed
O'er islands, continents, thro' this wide world,
As in the boundless space, bright orbs are mov'd;
Touch but this secret spring, there's peace or war,
Thrones totter, kings quake, empires fall.

Exit.

END OF ACT 1st.

ACT 2nd. SCENE 1st.

The Interior of a Baronial Castle

Enter Harold, Queen of Edward, and Alice the Swan-neck.

HAROLD.

Good Queen and Sister, I have lately heard,
The toils of war are chang'd for festive sports;
The sound of arms, gives place to music's notes,
To mirth and wit, and ancient revelry.
What think you, sister, is all fair that's seen,

Or lurks the foe beneath the mask of joy ?
The painted harlot oft allures to woe,---
The traitor smiles most, when his victim's doom'd,---
The tainted blast oft sooths whilst it infects,
The sun shines hotest, when he strikes with death.

QUEEN EDITH.

O ! Harold, thou has seen so much of war,
And devious ways of rude, Norman men,
I fear much to advise, or council such as thee ;
But whilst thou lives, I fear no Norman foe,
Thou'lt guard thy sister-queen; this ocean isle.

Harold, Addressing Alice.

But what say'st thou bright star of early life ?
Whose rays oft hail the rising king of day ;
Thy smile, thy song, and thy light-giving eye,
Are present with me, 'midst the din of war,
Art thou to shine amidst the courtly throng ?
Or blush in chasten'd modesty alone ?
Thou rose of England, thy own fate and mine,
Are twisted by the Sisters to one thread of life.

ALICE.

O Harold ! were you but a man of peace,
A shepherd youth, or rustic, and unknown,
And rising with the morn, with health and joy
To sip tha dew of life with purity of soul,
I would not love thee less,—have less to fear.—
The future, Ah ! the future, hangs like a mist
Upon the troubled ocean, all unseen, unknown.
A something presses heavy on my heart,
And oft I weep in sorrow when alone.

HAROLD.

My Alice, why should'st thou lament and weep ?

I love my country,---must the people save,
Must foil the foe, or find an early grave;
Yet hope with me, God's with the just and brave.

Enter Godwin.

The Norman wolves now driven from their lair,
In covert plots are seeking to ensare;
In holy garb or under courtly smiles,
Lies lurking poison or the ruffians dirk.
Harold to night, the royal festive board
Invites me to the feast of priests and knaves,
I hear, a victim to the Norman hate,
Is mark'd, and it may be thy ancient sire,
If so, my country and revenge are thine.

THE QUEEN.

How so I would I never had been born,
Think you, my liege, the king knows ought of this?
That he would sanction falsehood, fraud, or death?
As soon would virgin snow blush as the rose,
Or marble statues speak, or doves drink blood,
Or grapes yield poison, or mother's love
Turn brute, and eat her first born, most belov'd.

GODWIN.

My child, thy love becomes thee more than crowns,
Than all the glittering toys that wealth can give;
The king is honest, faithful, kind in heart,
But toss'd like thistle down upon the wind;
Sometimes the soothing gale of flattery moves his mind,
Again dark blasts of envy, from our foes
Assail, and stir the mire of our depravity;
But I have hope in him and our brave British race,
But most in heaven's omnipotence to save--
To blast the treacherous and destroy the knave.

Addressing Harold.

My son, I must away to mix with Norman mirth,

Which gives no pleasure, whilst they scourge this Isle.

Exit Godwin.

HAROLD.

If Godwin perish by these Norman slaves,
This sword shall be devoted to revenge;
Not vengeance without mercy, brightest gem,
That glitters in the crowns of gods or men,
Of kings or priests, prerogative divine.
But if he fall,---by what treacherous means or hand
Shall this be done? Monk Robert is a priest,
He knows the secrets of the chemist's art;
He is a priest,---and yet a Norman priest!
An holy man should know but what is good,
Be meek and pure, as the dew of heav'n,
For grace refines our nature from its dross;
But he a Norman is, and there the danger lies.
A Norman;---yes, if he who gave me life
Shall fall, heav'n and Britain shall avenge the wrong.

QUEEN EDITH.

O! Harold why thus dread those future ills,
That ne'er may come? the king is generous, kind;
My father is belov'd, but by a Norman few,
And these have more of fear than pow'r to harm.

ALICE.

My Harold calm thy hot, tempestuous mind,
Toss'd like the waves of ocean in a storm,
We'll meet what fate decrees,---we will endure,
Like rocks resisting the storm driven waves.

Exeunt Omnes.

END OF SCENE 1st. ACT 2nd.

ACT 2nd. SCENE 2nd.

A Castle of Duke William's, in Normandy.

A Storm.

Enter Osbert, Eustace, Erric, and Gurth.

Osbert.

How fares my friends? the good, old, Norman cause,
Flows onward as a river's placid stream,
Silent and smooth, as a midnight dream;
Yet falls and storms sometimes obstruct its path.
To night, ah! yes; to night,—how my soul glows!
Down to the glaring regions of the damn'd
Must, in the wild and wirlwind storm, descend
These Saxon dogs, of alien faith and birth;—
My faithful blade thusts for these Saxons' blood.
They're like the bird caught in the snarer's net,
Or cade lambs fed by the fell butcher's hand;---
How William press'd them to the glowing wine,
'Till reason quiver'd on her dubious throne,
And nature tottered, whilst they reel'd and sang,
Of glory to the Duke, who doom'd them then to death.

Erric.

Now, hark, Sir Osbert; these are dreadful deeds,
My soul abhors them, if they must be done;---
To meet the foe in combat's noble, brave,
To strike at undefended, unarm'd men
Is murder, that becomes the hireling slave;
But far more base, when with a friendly smile,
The cup of friendship, and the plighted faith
Of ancient hospitality are false as hell;
It is the forte of fallen men, fiends and demons,
To lure and dare such deeds of crime and death.

Gurth.

Ah! how is this, thou traitor, coward, knave?

Dar'st thou to beard the lion in his den?
Cast murder in his teeth, who has fed thee?
And whilst his wine is reeking on thy lips,
Breathe out black slander on our noble chief?

ERRIC.

I am a soldier-knight,---not assasin base,
Dare you not meet in manly fight these chiefs
Of saxon blood, come from the ocean isle?
Not seek to plunge your weapons in their hearts,
Conceal'd by darkness,---by a darker deed?
To fight and conquer is our glory, pride,
But no true knight will murder in cold blood;
Leave that to ruffians, stain not your plighted faith.

OSBERT. Traitor!

GURTH.. Villain!

EUSTACE.

Draw coward and defend thy braggart life,
Who dare resist the Duke or our good monk?
His breath pollutes the air, his voice these walls,
His eyes proclaim him dastard and a slave.

ERRIC.

Ah! Ah! who dares to prove these boasftul words?

EUSTACE. I.

OSBERT. And I.

Osbert and Erric fight, the former after a violent conflict, is brought down upon his knee, and Erric stands victor over him; when Gurth runs to the assistance of Osbert, and passes his sword through the body of Erric, who falls and dies.

ENTER ROBERT AND WILLIAM.

Robert calls Guthbert.

O! hasten Guthbert, holy unction bring,
His soul from this world must not wing its way
Until our sacred duties cleanse from sin:

Crosses him.

The cross must conquer and the soul ascend,
Pure as its Maker, to the realms of light.

DUKE WILLIAM. *Baccanalians sing.*

Hark they come, they sing the song of death
Osbert, and Eustace, Gurth, quick, dispatch
These Saxon hounds, they scent us in our den,
The grave is silent, death no secret tells.

Exeunt Osbert, Eustace, Gurth.

DUKE WILLIAM SOLILOQUIZES.

As travellers ascend the mountain's height,
How steep and dangerous! and oft the gulph
On either hand,---dark mists hung in mid air,
Look threatening,---an unknown, awful depth
Beneath,---above the sun's cold cheerless rays;
'Tis thus with kings, or those who would be kings.---
My fate is cast, the star of destiny prevails,---
Love, money, or what vain man calls fame,
These must work,---Osbert, Eustace, Gurth,
Men cunning of fence, will slander with their tongues
With their swords slaughter,---rob at command,—
Strip sacred temples, and burn down towns
And see men starve like dogs; and laugh with joy,
When maids, and wives and mothers are their spoils,
And fire spreads devastation thro' the land.
The mob I fear not, prisons, gibbets, chains
Limbs amputated, eyes pluck'd out, subdue them.
They shall tremble at the name of bastard king.—
But where's the Monk? engaged in sacred rites.

Monk Robert rises.

DUKE WILLIAM.

O! have you sent the fleeting soul to heav'n,
All hallow'd by your prayers, and sins forgiven?

MONK ROBERT.

Hush;
Are we alone? for his great soul has fled,

And Erric th' brave is number'd with the dead.
But Saxon heretics,—I heard their groans
May sink down, down!! to hotest, blackest hell.
But with the dead,—their destiny is pass'd;—
The living now must have our ceaseless care,
My secret agents say,—Harold will be here;
Ah! poison,---poison my Lord,---I know the drug;
Shall that be our next step to mount the throne?

DUKE WILLIAM.

No; Saxons, and the Britons love the youth,
And that would raise a open, fatal war;
Some stratagem must make his name accurs'd,—
The church hurl thunders, on his devoted head.

Monk Robert paces backwards and forwards.

Speaks.

I have the snare, leave that my liege to me,
He stands betwixt you, your crown,—me and my see.

Enter Cuthbert.

All now is ready for the sacred mass,
And holy rites await devoted love!

Exeunt Omnes.

END OF SCENE 2nd. ACT 2nd.

SCENE 3rd. ACT 2nd.

A Mansion.

Enter Harold and Alice.

My Alice I've resolved to visit Normandy,
The vessels lay at anchor for the voyage,
Before I sail, the pole-star of my soul
Has drawn me to the port of smiling love.
Nay; Alice why so mournful and so sad,
This life's a voyage of changing calms and storms,

And adverse winds may blow and waves run high,
But these once pass'd, then comes a peaceful calm;—
Fear not, whilst Harold lives, thou still art safe,
And once the perils pass'd, the haven gain'd,
Then Mars gives place to Cupid, and we're one.
What not a smile? 'tis true I love this land,---
This Isle of freedom is the native home,
Her sons are brave, and I must be their chief,
And liberty or death, the watchword is.
But we must part, yet we must meet again;
The Norman wiles and snares shall not destroy;
If we cannot escape by other means,
The sword shall cut them through; just like the lion
When his switching tail sweeps down with ease
The puny spider, and his fragile web.

ALICE.

O! Harold I much dread these Norman foes.
For they are cruel, deadly in their hate;
That thou should'st triumph is my constant pray'r,
For should'st thou fall, our star of hope is set.

Enter Bishop Stigand.

STIGAND.

My son, this life is one continuous strife,
Where, like two giant demons, evil and good,
Contend, with equal might, each to subdue;
They like two mighty winds, from adverse points,
Rush to each other's arms with elemental strength,
And tug for conquest, yet each still remains.
Now o'er this nation hangs a darkening fate,
The Normans threaten, and new priests denounce,
But whilst you live, the evil cannot harm,
And let me bless you, e're you shall depart.

ALICE.

Good Bishop, I do fear, yes, fear that men
Are far more cruel, than the winds and waves,
For they are guided by the Almighty hand;
But men oft stab before the dirk is seen;
The lion roars before he springs,---the snake
Will hiss before he stings, but cruel man,
Forecasts his dark designs, the victim falls,
And then the shout of triumph, marks the knave.

Enter Queen Edith.

My Brother, glad am I, that you are here,
For I would caution you against the foreign race,
Their plots and wily arts I far more dread,
Than open warfare, or a generous foe;
And rumours are afloat, borne on the northern breeze
That you must fall a victim, I must seek a home,
In some lone convent, there to pray for peace,
And sing a requiem to departed friends.
O! Harold stay with us, the king is sick,
And if he die, what friend have I on earth,
Or thy lov'd country, safety, but in thee.

BISHOP STIGAND.

There is a pow'r above whose searching eye
Sees all, whose arm directs the rolling orbs,
And fills infinity, as light fills space;
No spark of life shines or becomes extinct,
No breath of air, or frailer breath of man,
Or atom on the spacious ocean shore,
Can move but by his all-directing will.
Shall nations rise and fall, but by his word,
The friends of justice, liberty, and love
Die like the glow-worm, e're she shines her hour?
And shall the brave and free, for ever bow
Their necks, that th' vile, with iron feet may tread

Them in the dust, and spurn them in their pride?
Shall innocence for ever hide, in shame, her head,
As th' light-giving diamond in the earth?
Shall vice and fraud and brutal lust,
The pow'r of darkness, triumph o'er the just?
No; heav'n forbid, struck by the Almighty arm,
These soon shall fall, as angels of the light
Fell from his throne, the glory of the sky,
Hurl'd headlong down the bottomless abyss,
Subdu'd and vanquish'd by the eternal one.

A Pause.

Forgive me Harold, for my ardent zeal,
Has rous'd me to excess, from love of you,
Of our devoted people and the church;---
By you, and them, and it, I stand or fall.

ALICE.

The purpose, Harold of your daring soul,
Is written in your dauntless mien and look;
Then go, no longer will I doubt or fear;---
But should you fall, by Norman guile or force,
Of woman's love and vengeance, future times
Shall hear and know how dread that vengeance is.

HAROLD.

Alice farewell, the ship her sails unfurls,
She's like the wild-swan spreading out her wings,
To swim the ether to some distant clime;
Her fabled song has not more charms than thine,
Let thine charm storms, or perils far or near,
Whilst thou breath'st love no earthly foe I fear.
Farewell good Bishop,
And farewell England's Queen.

Exit Harold.

ALICE.

Ah! he is gone, the star of England's hope

Is set, a dreary darkness now surrounds us all;
The Norman cur, when once he snarls, he bites,
And whom the coward bastard strikes, must fall.
When born, all goodness from his presence fled,
Owls schreeched, toads crok'd, wolves bark'd,
And witches with their wizard lords did dance;
The air was sultry, stars from heaven fell,---
All nature shrunk from his polluted touch,
And demons sang, as demons sing in hell.

BISHOP STIGAND.

Let not your earthly passions bear the sway,
These tales may be the fictions of the mind,
And rumour with her quick inventive tongue,
May give them strength and float them thro' the land,
As echoes on the air, borne by thoughtless men.
'Tis true, he's low in stature, measle-skin'd,
Paunch'd bellied, tiger-faced, with hairless head,---
Prophane in jest, unletter'd and unchaste,---
All this may be the rude case of the pearl,
For nature plays some strange freaks with poor man,
The gilded case sometimes contains a blank,
Whilst ruder forms are rich with love and grace.

ALICE.

I dread that fearful man. But I will sing.

ALICE SINGS.

O! like a bird upon the wing
My love is on the sea;
The vessel ploughs the briny deep,
Yet there is hope for me.

* * * *

The cherub angels guard him,
The wind and waves obey;
No evil then shall harm him,
Whilst I in faith can pray.

* * * *

My love is on the ocean wide,
Where rays of light will play ;
The winds blow gently over him,
And guard him night and day.

* * * *

The sea birds woe the ocean storm,
And ride in safety there ;
And when the storm is over,
They nestle in a pair.

* * * *

Thus love rules the ocean bird,—
O ! How love nestles here,
My heart glows warmly with his flame,
For Harold triumphs there.

END OF SCENE 3rd. ACT 2nd.

ACT 2nd. SCENE 4th.

A Norman Mansion near the sea.

DUKE WILLIAM.

What news, friend Robert, have you heard of late,
Of Harold,---Edward, Britain's feeble king?
He lingers long, I would he'd cross the Styx,
And play with kings in some Elysian fields.
But then there's Harold,---what of this bold chief?
I would he were as food for filthy worms,
Or swallow'd by the waves, his spirit damn'd.

MONK ROBERT.

Well, sire, before the sun's eternal light,
In his blue tractless path, illumes this earth,
This Saxon serf will tread this hostile shore.
With honour treat him, at your royal board,
The man has faith, the heretic reveres
Those powers we hold, in terror o'er the mind ;
Our sacred sword is keener far than steel,
Will pierce the deathless soul unseen, yet felt ;
These pangs of conscience, earthly arts can't heal ;
Thus we make cowards of earth's bravest sons,
Enslave the soul in adamantine chains.

Enter Messenger to announce the arrival of Harold.

MESSENGER. My Lord,

Harold of England has moor'd within the bay,
An herald has announc'd, that he is safe,
Waits your commands, on board his stately ship.
Exit Messenger.

DUKE WILLIAM.

He's safe; his ship, the cur already apes the king,
I would he were entomb'd within some shirk,
Or wasting piece-meal on some barren shore,
Hark, Robert, we must smile upon the knave,
As we would on a toad whilst crushing him;---
Here, like moths, he plays around the candle's blaze,
Nearer, and still nearer till his wings are burnt,
Then down he falls, and plays no more before the sun.

MONK ROBERT.

We must not hang this dog, as other worthless curs,
Be you to him most flattering, seducing, kind;
As some brave knight, heap on him honours, wealth,
Let him move in your court, the shadow-king,
The substance is with us, my plan's complete,
And you shall see him tremble at our feet;
He who has faith in our most sacred creeds,
Is weak as childhood, falls prostrate at a name;
The soul is ours,---brute-force belongs to kings,
And thus we play with men and vanquish all.

Enter Messenger.

My Lord, Harold of England.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Hail Harold! our much beloved expect'd host,
True son of noble birth, of nobler, higher hopes,
England's bright star, and centre of her fame,
We hail you, wish you prosperity and health,
Son of that fertile Isle, your long circle run
And shed illustrious light upon th' Saxon race;---
I would embrace and honour you as their great king.

MONK ROBERT.

I too would now embrace you as my son,
More dear to me than honour, station, wealth;
I dearly love the brave and noble, such as you,

HAROLD.

My faithful friends I greet you, my heart glows
With true old English warmth, now thus we meet;
Our King bade me salute you in his name,
His life, fast ebbing, is now nearly done,
Still feeble, and more feeble burns the vital flame;
His race is almost run, yet England's sun,
Shall set, in rich and glowing light, his soul
Shall pass from earthly strife, to endless peace.---
My noble Duke, three knights of Saxon race,
Have sought your hospitable home and hall;---
A death-like silence now hangs o'er their names,
Where are they? amongst the living or the dead?

MONK ROBERT.

Dear Harold; I'm a priest, bound by faith and love,
This pendant cross, I bear, and masses, pray'rs,
And holy thoughts absorb my humble soul;---
These knights, to distant climes to war, are gone,
That when earth's wars are o'er, and endless peace
May then reward their zeal, as faithful sons
Of our true church, and only ancient creed,
With us they fight, and suffer, their spilt blood,
Their sins wash out, and pure they rise to heav'n.

DUKE WILLIAM calls a messenger, who enters.

My faithful messenger, show Harold to his rooms.

Exeunt Harold and Messenger.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Well done my trusty Monk, you've spoke that well,
They've gone to foreign lands, whence none return,
Ah, hah; their mouldering tongues, no tales will tell,
Their swords and spears may waste and rust in sloth.

Enter Osbert, Eustace and Gurth.

OSBERT.

My lord, another wolf has cross'd our path,
Our holy father and your grace may plan,
And those who would usurp and treason play,
Shall follow those who sleep in endless night.

EUSTACE, My liege,

I've seen a gulf, deep, bottomless and dark,
Down which the stiffneck'd heretics were hurl'd;---
A darker gulf is that beyond the grave,
If you command, no earthly arm can save.

GURTH.

And I have arms, and potions well prepar'd,
Who drinks or tastes, their earthly doom is fix'd,
You and this learned Monk I must obey.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Enough of talk, we will some scheme mature,
And then to work with silence and success.

Exeunt the three Knights.

DUKE WILLIAM.

There is a dead fatality, that rules this world,
The future is unseen, unknown, a void,
Events are balanc'd, hung o'er mortal men,
A breath of air, or atom turns the scale,
Now down to death, or rise to endless fame;---
And what is life? a bauble for a child,
Now floats in air,---sparkles, bursts and vanishes,
As rainbows painted by the rays of light
'Tis seen, 'tis felt, and valued, then for ever past.

MONK ROBERT.

Why reason thus, my lord, when hope's bright beams,
Shed their propitious light, thro' years to come.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Well sometimes conscience, like a scorpion whip,
Flogs our dull souls, until they wreathe and bleed,
Like some poor wretch, who's tortur'd near to death,
Yet more elastic, springs again to health.

MONK ROBERT.

Whilst you and conscience, struggl'd thus and fought,
Like northern lights, empty forms with shadows,
Phantom with phantom, creatures of the brain,---
My thoughts were active to invent the means,
By which to push out of ambition's path
The man who most obstructs our end and aim.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Proceed then and unlock the stream of thought.

Let words reveal pour inmost soul to me.
What is it you design ?

MONK ROBERT.

A potion or a powder.

DUKE WILLIAM.

How? where? when?

MONK ROBERT.

A rich and sumptious feast will grace your board.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Well!!

MONK ROBERT.

Gurth is most skilful in this secret art,—
Let this once taint his blood, flow in his veins,
No human art can save him from the grave.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Enough, agreed!

Exeunt; the Duke and Robert.

END OF SCENE 4th. ACT 2nd.

ACT 3rd. SCENE 1st.

A Park in the front of a Ducal Mansion.

Enter DUKE WILLIAM and MONK ROBERT.

DUKE WILLIAM.

My faithful Monk, did I not tell you true ?
That life's a game, where all is won or lost
By th' merest chance ?---the flight of birds,---
The contests of reptiles, th' moon's darken'd orb,---
The raven's croak,---or blast of changing wind
Have won or lost, o'erturn'd or founded Empires.---
And at the feast, whilst we securely sat,
The fatal dish prepared for Harold's death,---
To send pain raging through his heart and veins,
(I tremble, whilst that I recall the thought)
Fell to my lot, the viand touch'd my lip,
A moment and this pulse would then have ceas'd,
These eyes to drink in light, these ears th' floating
sound,

With all the music of the harp and song.

MONK ROBERT.

You do not reason well, let heav'n be thank'd,
That you are here; how specially is mark'd
The hand of him, who rules earth, sky and sea,
Those brilliant orbs,---yet sees a sparrow fall;---
You do not reason well, for all on earth
Is mov'd, breathes, lives, departs this fickle life,
By one supreme, unerring and directing will;
And as the pupil of his eye, he guarded you;
You are the child of his all watchful care,
'Tis proved by this event, and is as plain,
As my deep gratitude, for all that's pass'd

DUKE WILLIAM.

And Ah; My gracious Monk, yet Harold lives!

MONK ROBERT.

The bird sometimes escapes the snarer's snare,
The fish the bait,---the fox or wolf the hounds,---
That noble bird, the eagle, soars so high,
Is lost in dazzling glory, all alone,
Yet all must fall by skilful sportsmen's arts.

Enter Harold with a bow in his hand.

HAROLD.

I now accept, your grace, the challenge giv'n;
The morn is bright, and music fills the air;
All nature is awake from her dull sleep, and light
Now guilds with his clear, mystic rays, the mountain tops,
Th' Eternal hills are dress'd in young day's gay attire,
The hounds send forth their deep-mouth'd music, sweeter
To the huntsman's ear, than harps, or lutes or songs;
The steeds impatient wait, and snort and paw the ground;---
The horn's shrill blasts, now summon to the chase,
Then let us haste, to test our bows, our skill and steeds

DUKE WILLIAM.
Ah Harold! you glad my heart, to see you here,
Now let us hasten to the field and try our fortunes there.

Exeunt Harold and Duke William.

MONK ROBERT. *Solus.*
They're gone; now to my task; twice foil'd 'tis true,
The battle fail'd me once, and once the feast;
Defeats shall spur me, as the charger, to the foe,
I must call up my monks and thro' their aid,
And that of sacred relics, sacred oaths,
Invoke the priests, and the dull mass enslav'd;
For when a nation's conquer'd in her soul,
And discord reins the demon of the day,
Kings fall, and naked rebellion hides her head.

Calls the Monk Cuthbert.
My trusty monk, for holy rites prepare,
Our brethren call to aid, advise with us.

Cuthbert rings.

ENTER MONKS.

1*st. Monk.* We wait your pleasure,

MONK ROBERT.
You have the care of relics, sculls, hair, bones,
Of saints and hermits, men of ancient times;
Prepare and bring the hallow'd treasure here.

2*nd. Monk.* What is your will with us?

MONK ROBERT.
Let that our sacred altar, holy host,
Be decorated with inventive art,
Prepar'd, adorn'd for solemn rites and oaths.

2*nd. Monk.* Your will shall be, as if it were our own.

3*rd. Monk.* I wait, most holy father your commands.

MONK ROBERT.
The chancel of the church must be renew'd
Resplendent with its rich and varied charms
Of gold and silver, diamonds and pearls.

4*th. Monk.* I wait your orders, with obedient will.

MONK ROBERT.
To your office now repair; that sacred book,

On which men swear the irrevocable oath,
Bring from your treasure to our presence here.

Exeunt the four Monks.

MONK ROBERT.

Good Cuthburt see the relics are brought here
I would inspect them, their history hear.

Enter two Monks bearing the relics and placing them before Robert.

MONK ROBERT.

Ah! my Monk, whose is this tapering hand?

Monk. It is what once had life in that distinguish'd saint,
Who n'er touch'd gold, but pass'd this transient life,
Without a house, or home, or wealth, or scrip;
Poorer than the poorest, rich only in our faith.

MONK ROBERT.

Saint Paul's, a much rever'd and honour'd name.
Whose skull is this?

Monk. His who, with firy zeal, preach'd to the world;
And who unlock'd the door of that fair clime,
Where reigns perpetual spring,—founder of our church,
Whose labour ended on the hallow'd cross.

MONK ROBERT.

And whose this hair?

Monk. The same that hung in undulating ringlets,
On what we now perceive a naked form,
And both have wrought great miracles.

MONK ROBERT.

And what this wood mark'd with the emblem of our faith,
The cross, by which we conquer foes on earth, in hell?

Monk. Part of that hallow'd cross on which Saint Peter hung,
As if unworthy of this earth, his pendant head
Hung down,—his soul assended to a throne.

MONK ROBERT.

Most holy man, devotion is its own reward,
The cross triumphant, is the lamb in pow'r.—
Cuthburt I would be alone.

MONK ROBERT. *Solus.*

The wise man knows,—the pliant fool believes ;
The knave suspects and traces out his plans,
And plays on dull credulity with fair pretence ;
He plucks the geese, and feeds upon the spoils.—
This hand is perhaps, that of some robber chief,—
These fingers stain'd with rich or virtuous blood ;—
Ah, Ah ! by it, yet miracles are wrought ;—
This skull ! the idiot's thoughts might wander here,
Or raving madman's—lust of debauchee,
Or miser's sordid dreams o'er hoards of gold.---
Saint Peter's, I have seen some twenty of that Saint's !
The heads and limbs of holy men, like mushrooms
Must spring, when mid-night darkness shrouds the hour.
And hair,---this hair, how pretty for a man's,---
Young maidens are despoil'd of their rich locks,
When they the vow of chastity invoke ;
Yet these work miracles,---this indeed is true
The miracle of faith, that dead-bones live,
That living virtue springs from lifeless things.

Exit Monk Robert.

Enter Cuthburt and other Monks, crossing themselves, they carry off the holy relics.

END OF ACT 3rd, SCENE 1st.

ACT 3rd, SCENE 2nd.

The Interior of a Church, with the rays of the evening sun darting through the coloured windows ; with altar, images &c. The Virgin Mother standing near the altar.

Enter Duke William and Monk Robert.

DUKE WILLIAM.

This man like some fam'd witch, flies over hill and dale,
No danger to his life or steed, stays his career,
If hunting thrones, be as his hunting deer or stags,
He will be England's king, no future perils fear,
What say you ? now what council give ?

MONK ROBERT.

Each nation has a soul, forget not that great truth,

There is our strength, for oaths bind men as babes,
For men are weak as childhood,—threatening priests
Hold terrors o'er them,—they tremble at a shade;
Thus nation's minds are calm, or raised to storms,
And then 'tis onwards, conquest and to conquer.

DUKE WILLIAM.

What would you then have done?

MONK ROBERT.

Now is all prepar'd, to bind by solemn oath,
The Normans first will swear that you are king,
That ancient England, yours is by right and birth,
Then must Harold swear, or traitor be proclaim'd;
And if he swear and afterwards be king,
The curse of our good church will hurl him down.

DUKE WILLIAM.

My learned Monk, the see of Canterbury's yours
With all its honours, placed next to the crown,
The mitre and the sceptre in union shall reign.
When shall this rite have sanction from above.

MONK ROBERT.

We only wait your pleasure and commands.

DUKE WILLIAM.

The chase once o'er, the feast demands our care,
And then our Knights to our supremacy we swear,
Farewell, I hasten to the banquet.

Exit Duke William

MONK ROBERT. *Solus.*

Our Supremacy!!
And so he dreams he will be Englands' king,
And with the sceptre, be supreme o'er all.
Ah! Kings will dream, as their poor earth-worm man,
Who dreams that want and pain, reap heav'nly crowns,
And kings a paradise would make whilst here;
But crowns have thorns, which give the wearers pain,
And crowns unseen, like visions vanish into air;
The crook and mitre, emblems of lasting pow'r,
To these kings bow, and subjects willingly obey,
It is the latent heat which moves all human life,

On this men hang, as worlds are hung in space,
The priests as giant demons, work the secret springs;
Those mighty changes, when suns rise and set.

Enter Cuthbert amd other monks, and arrange themselves near the altar; Monk Robert in the mean time, performing many genuflections before the crucifix. After them enter the Norman Knights and Nobles, with Duke William at their head, having hold of Harold's arm.

Monk Robert standing before the Altar, demands

Who will attest by oath, allegiance to our Duke,
That he is England's King by law and right divine?

1*st. Knight.* I swear, and my retainers say Amen!

2*nd. Knight.* That William is the King of England I
And all my true retainers say, Amen! [swear,

3*rd, Knight.* I swear, that our most noble Duke is
And all who follow me must say, Amen! [King,

4*th. Knight.* Fealty I swear; our Duke is England's
And he who will not, is a traitor, knave. [King,

MONK ROBERT.

Will Harold swear allegiance to our King?

Harold stands firm and silent. Again the Monk requests him to advance, all eyes are fixed upon him, all wait in silence; Harold much agitated approaches and swears on the altar and the books; immediately Monk Robert withdraws the rich velvet covering from off that on which Harold has sworn, and the sacred relicts appear in the view of all.—In the midst of solemn music the knights and others withdraw, leaving behind them Monk Robert and Duke William.

MONK ROBERT.

My noble Duke, dead bones have more effect,
Than swords or arrows, potions, force of arms;
How pale his face, how weak his well nerv'd limbs!
His whole frame heav'd, when th' virgin mov'd her eyes,
Those relicts,---they appear'd to listen to his oath,
This shook his soul,---laid prostrate the whole man;
It was the light'nings flash, that struck the stubborn oak,
And shiver'd it, as some poor feeble leaf.
And mark me, noble Duke, this memorable day
With this event, shall pass o'er th' dark blue deep,
To younder Isle,---spread by ten thousand tongues
Shall be the harbinger, to our success in war.

DUKE WILLIAM.
What is done, is well done!

Enter Harold.

HAROLD.
Your grace, I crave your leave, I must depart,
Affairs of high import, thus calls me home,
Your hospitality I would return.

MONK ROBERT.
Remember your most solemn oath!

HAROLD.
That I shall n'er forget!

DUKE WILLIAM.
Nor I!

Harold places his hand upon his sword.

MONK ROBERT.
Hold traitor, would you pollute this edifice?

HAROLD.
No; that I cannot do do, whilst thou art here!

Exeunt Omnes.

ACT 3rd. SCENE 3rd.

A BISHOP'S PALACE.

Enter Bishop Stigand and Monks Edmund and Edgar,

BISHOP STIGAND.
The King is dead! a gloom hangs o'er the land,
Prophetic I do fear of future ills;
And rumour with her busy tongue, is rife
Of ships and warriors, that will invade our shores;
The peaceful life of Edward, ebb'd its last hours
As if the soul, ere it depart, could, as the past,
With seaching eye, the future ken, with all its woes.
The church of Rome is allied with our foes, [home,
One choice alone remains, the church,—our native
The first makes slaves,---the last free faithful sons;---
Some foe has scatter'd, in our vineyard, weeds,
Stale prophesies of saints, whose tongues are earth,
Whose silence once disturb'd, would wake the dead;
These fleetly fly, like demons, in the air,
And make men pale with fear, their souls unnerve,

They shake like cowards, fly ere th' fight begins.
But if my country sink, as some majestic ship
Lost in the ocean gulf, I perish in the storm.

MONK EDMUND.

But why these sad forebodings? Is it not Harold King?
You crown'd him, and none dare his right dispute.
These babling tales die, like the summer's breeze
That moves the verdant leaves, it sleeps, and all is [past.

BISHOP STIGAND.

I would thy words were true,—the sword is drawn,
Hangs like a meteor star, o'er this doom'd land,
And threatens vengeance, by the arm of heav'n.

MONK EDGAR.

These rumours pass most currant thro' the land,
Borne on evil-breath, with treacherous hope;
To subjugate the feeble minds of men,
And found a throne on spectres, plunder, fraud.

Enter Priests and Knights, afterwards King Harold. All kneel except Bishop Stigand.

BISHOP STIGAND.

Our liege, most welcome to our humble home.

HAROLD.

And our good Bishop, I greet you with joy.
Turns towards the Company.

Why thus bow th' knee? a King is but man,
Is he not born in weakness, nourish'd by th' breast,
And learns to see, hear, feel, to taste or walk, [moth'r
As others; totters in his first steps,---feebly calls
In childhood pleas'd with toys, weeps o'er a broken reed;
In youth he flies his kite, or sports his playful dog;
In manhood, when his son is sick, does he not grieve?
Has he not all the sorrows, pleasures, pains of man?
He breathes th' same air, thirsts, hungers, and is weary,
Must eat, drink, and sleep, or he must die.
When born all men are equal,---death no distinction
The kingly office is the centre of all pow'r, [knows,---
Round which revolves the stars of feebler light;
He should be uncontroll'd for good,---for evil

Powerless,---the sword as guardian angel,
Should protect the weak from th' bold oppressor,
The peasant from the lord,---guard liberty for all.

BISHOP STIGAND.

My son, by heaven, you were born a king,
For noble thoughts and deeds become the crown.

Enter Hague Maigrot; Messenger from William Duke of Normandy.

HUGUE MAIGROT.

Duke William sends with sanction of the church,
And now reminds you Harold of your oath;
Before high heaven sworn,---in open day,
On relicts held in reverence by good men:
He claims this kingdom as his natural right,
The will of Edward, dead, and papal gift of Rome.

HAROLD.

Forc'd oaths are not register'd upon high,
Nor is man bound by that he does not will;
For he who must drink death, when tyrants nod,
Contracts no guilt of murder by the deed,
Is innocent in this, and that fair world to come.---
He claims my kingdom, 'tis not mine to give, nor his,
My people hold the crown, and give it were they please,
Is it this toy he asks, let him this symbol take,
Not so, the liberty of th' brave Saxon race, [dead.
With that he takes this sword, and I sleep with the

Bishop Stigand takes the crown from the floor, Harold having taken it from his head and cast it from him.

BISHOP STIGAND.

Crowns are but emblems, that become the great,
When virtue, justice, love of human weal
Guide every act, and govern every thought;---
The sun gives light and heat, without reserve,
Glows in the crawling worm, as in th' mightest king,
All live by each, and each by all, and one
Vast circle of infinity includes the whole;---
Thus he who rules should shed his kindly ray
Like that bright orb the ruling star of day.

Exeunt all except Harold and Bishop Stigand.

Enter Alice.

O! Harold I have dream'd, and such a dream,
As if an arrow had pierc'd through my soul;
I tremble whilst I think of that dread night;---
I thought, I saw a monster, flying in the air,
As if he had sprung from the spacious sea;
He breath'd out flames, as th' dread lightening-flash,
His tail was barb'd as with a serpent's sting;
And when he lighted on our white clift Isle,
He dealt out death to man, to wife and child;—
Amongst the dead, my Harold I saw thee,
The nation weeping that their king was dead.

BISHOP STIGAND.

With prodigies and dreams, and prophesies a truce,
For souls press'd down with grief, pass reason's bounds,
When soothing sleep should most restore to health,
And wander in the world of thought, like down,
When blown by changing or tempestuous winds,
Tost in thoughts wide regions, in a wild career.
Sooth down thy sorrows and aswage thy griefs,
For heav'n defends the right, we must prevail.

Enter Messenger.

HAROLD. Whence springs those disputes?

Messenger. Two Knights an hearing of the King demand.

HAROLD. Well, admit them.

Messenger. These Knights my liege are arm'd.

HAROLD. We have no fear of man.

Enter the two Knights.

HAROLD.

Whence come ye? And your bold message what?

1st Knight.

From William of Normandy and England's King,
And he demands obedience to your oath,
Or we must call you that,—*purjur'd Traitor?*

HAROLD.

O! From the Norman Bastard, and a bastard king,

Draws his sword.

There is my answer, bear it to your lord!

1st Knight. Ah! base traitor!
2nd Knight. Thou perjured traitor!

Both Kniyhts attack the King, he defends himself and slays one; the other is seized and bound by the guards.

HAROLD, standing over the dead body of the first knight.

Thus despots always deal out death at will,
Brute force, and worse ferocity their law,
That corpse is th' soulless emblem of that state
Where unrestrain'd ambition, lust of gold,
Unites in one or an userping few,
Like brutes that feed upon a feebler race,
Where pow'r is right, and right because its strong.---
There is a ray of light beams o'er this Isle,---
The star of freedom, whose ne'er dying light,
Shall shed its lustre o'er the Saxon race;
And clearer and brighter shall this light become,
Until benighted man, shall hail it from all lands,
And spurn the despots proudly shout, *he's free.*

ACT 3rd. SCENE 4th.

A Baronial Castle in Normandy.

DUKE WILLIAM.

That man is an enigma, unread, unknown,
The sages and philosopher's of old have taught;—
Men are the dust we tread upon, and spurn.
To conquer with this hair of good Saint Peter's head,
This papal Bull,---how subtle are these priests!
We must fight them in th' political arena,
And mind with mind for victory contend,
'Till one stands proudly pre-eminent, supreme.

Enter Monk Robert.

MONK ROBERT.

Our faithful sons have stricken to the soul,
That hardy race, which fears nor foe, nor death,
But tremble at the name of relicts, priest, and pope.
We vanquish whilst we save,---you feed the loathsome grave,
You conquer whilst you slay, your sceptre's smeared with blood,

Ours bear the innocent emblem of the lamb.

DUKE WILLIAM.

The lamb and lion,---popes, priests and kings,
A trinity in unity, indissolubly one ;---
Yet near the lamb, must crouch the monarch brute
For weakness must obey, and yield to strength ;
And fear makes slaves, and slaves give wealth to kings
In unity we stand, divided we must fall,
The throne and altar are invincible.

Enter Osbert, Eustace, Monk Edmund ect., with Hugue Maigrot.

HUGUE MAIGROT.

To th' Saxon Harold was your pleasure borne,
We call'd him traitor, conjour'd up his oath ;
He drew his sword and said, this, my answer, is,
If you dare, take it, bear it to your *Lord.*
And being arm'd we rush'd upon that man ;
One ambassador he slew, and banish'd me the realm,
Thus mixing crime with crime until his cup is full.

DUKE WILLIAM.

We must resort to war, and thus revenge our wrongs,
Each hasten to his corps,---unfurl the sails,
The winds of heav'n will waft us to that shore,
And we will hurl that traitor from the throne.

OSBERT.

Our ships impatient wait now in the port,
Are well provision'd,---men arm'd to the teeth ;
We wait but your command and favouring winds,
And then for war, for victory and revenge.

EUSTACE.

Brave men from all parts are now in our camp ;
Men from all nations, countries and climes,
Have heard your fame and proudly crow'd your ranks ;
O ! land us on that Isle of soulless knaves,
Yours is the crown, ours land, gold, women, slaves.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Your wish shall be my own, and we will sail ;
Go drink to our success, and heav'n avenge the wrong.

MONK ROBERT.
Your grace already, I do, hail you king.
DUKE WILLIAM.
And I hail thee a Bishop, with the shepherd's crook.
MONK ROBERT.
To hook in lands and wealth, women, wine, and love.
DUKE WILLIAM.
All pleasant things, but purchas'd by the sword,
Men fight for kings, and pray with priests and hope
for heav'n;
But pow'r and wealth, create a paradise on earth.
MONK ROBERT.
True.
DUKE WILLIAM.
Ah! Ah! Hah!
MONK ROBERT, you laugh.
DUKE WILLIAM.
And why not laugh, when in a jolly mood; [Kings,
Come let us have a feast for priests, and Monks and
I have invited priests and captains, leaders to be here.

Enter Cuthburt.

Agreeable to your orders, music, women, wine,
Now wait your time, are ready for the feast.

Scene changes to ancient magnificent banquet Hall. Enters a great number of nuns, priests and warriors. They drink and sing.

The priest lives like a jovial king,
Without his care and sorrow;
Time glides along, whilst he can sing,
All thought, all grief to-morrow.
* * * *
Whilst others toil and sigh and fight,
He luxurates in pleasure;
Fair damsels are his dreams by night,
They are his heart-felt treasure.
* * * *
When o'er his brow a moment flits,
Dull care or sighing sorrow,
O'er rosy wine and songs he sits,
And leaves both 'till to-morrow.
* * * *

The king must guard him, with his sword
The people pay and fear him;
His life leaves nothing to record,
But love and wine they cheer'd him!

DUKE WILLIAM.

The Monk must not thus triumph o'er the King,
We do not sing, for conquest is our game;
The Normans must be free, that's their birthright;
It is no murder heretics to slay, or slaves,
These are most justly doom'd, by heaven's decree;
The last are out-casts,---have no right to live
But by our will, and that's the will of heav'n.
Kings reign by right divine,---can do no wrong,
From this 'tis clear, whate'er they do is right;
And what is right, is right, that none dispute;
'Tis right that we should reign, and you possess
The British Isle; I th' throne, you wealth and lands;
That this is right, you will admit, so we must conquer,
And having conquer'd all is mine and yours.
Men, like the ocean's waves, that wash the shore,
Each follow its precursor, with so quick a speed,
The change is seen and lost, with each succeeding wave,---
The present, past and future are alike unknown;
Kings never die, nor popes, nor wealth, nor fertile lands,
Thrones, creeds, and priests shall live for ever.

Exeunt Omnes.

END OF SCENE 4th, AND ACT 3rd.

ACT 4th. SCENE 1st.

INTERIOR OF AN ABBY.

Enter BISHOP STIGAND and HAROLD the KING.

HAROLD.

Good morning to your Grace.

BISHOP STIGAND.

The same my liege to you.
What news?

HAROLD.
I hear of nought but rumours;
What hear your Grace?
BISHOP STIGAND.
The foe has landed on the eastern Coast.
HAROLD.
And who commands?
BISHOP STIGAND.
The Pirate Harold, andy our brother Tostig.
HAROLD.
Ah! we must see to this!
Ten thousand horrors has terrific war,
But serfdom is the last of ills in life;
The slave is exil'd in his native land,
To die is brave, to live, protracted death.
The slave's a worm crush'd by the tyrant's foot,
And mingles with the dust, without a sigh.
BISHOP STIGAND.
The richest soils, untill'd, are rank with weeds,
Your brother Tostig gives us proof of this;
His loves and hatreds are in both extremes;---
Against his country to unsheath his sword,
Is worse than canabal that eats the heart
That glow'd with purest love for its first-born.
HAROLD.
Ambition with much purer lusture shines,
When human virtues luminate the path;
When each achievement elevates the man.
But he who strikes his country 'till she bleeds,
Is more unnatural than the parent brute,
That takes the life, which nature bade her give.
With passions vile his reason is eclips'd
His turbid feelings, change their proper course,
And light and darkness are as they were one,
Until, nor right nor wrong he cares to know.
O! that our passions were as pure as strong,
And from the fountain of all goodness flow'd;

And when that each its end had answer'd here
To that unbounded ocean, pure as driven snow
Return,---but tinctur'd with benevolence and love.
But man is man, and we must meet our fate;
Yet like physicians, who draw poluted blood,
Of fell disease the cause,---so in the state,
Sharp remedies for deep disease must be apply'd.

Enter English Monks.

1*st Monk.*
We crave an hearing of our much lov'd King.

King Harold.
What is your grievance?

2*nd Monk.*
An enemy lays waste our native land,
With fire and sword,
And Tostig your brother leads the common foe.

King Harold.
At this I grieve, that from our country's core,
Should spring a foe to weaken or destroy,
But war must be repell'd by war, force by force,
And victory smiles on him whose arm'd with right.

3*rd Monk.*
My liege, great prodigies have oft appear'd
From cloudless skys, the thunder has been heard
And images of saints have woes proclaim'd,
The holy virgin sweat great drops of blood,
And looks terrific, sat on her face and brow,
And in our fanes, are self-created flames;---
The cattle in our vales, now suffer, moan and die,
And men's hearts fail them, dread the coming woe.

Harold.
A secret foe has wrought this dreaded work!

1*st Monk.*
The father of all lies, the Devil.

Harold.
Yes; seated in men's hearts, devising mischief!

2*nd Monk.*
O Holy virgin; hail Maria!
BISHOP STIGAND. *Sarcastically.*
Most holy Church!
3*rd Monk.*
We owe allegiance to our head supreme.
BISHOP STIGAND.
To all good men, but most to heaven's commands.
HAROLD.
And heav'n with its almighty power, will shield,
Her sons from danger, tho' black Hell oppose.
Exeunt Omnes, except Harold.
Solus.
My Brother! is lost to shame and sunk so low,
He whom I lov'd and guarded when a boy;
And yet would cherish him within my soul.---
I have two hands, and would I have one die,
And hang a useless member to this trunk?
My feet, each help the other when I walk,
One lost should not I limp with tardy pace?
An eye struck out, would darken half my soul;
If we were one, and each to play his part,
This Isle, would have two eyes, and feet and hands,
With which to wrestle, watch, pursue the foe,
Until subdued, and vanquished and destroy'd.
I must dissuade him ere we meet in war.

END OF SCENE 1st. ACT 4th.

SCENE 2nd. ACT 4th.

Moon light near an Encampment.

Enter Tostig.

TOSTIG.
So now he's king, am I to be his serf.
And bend the knee to one, who is my equal?
No I would rather wander in some wilds unknown,
And herd with wolves, and live on plunder,
Or skim the ocean, as a free, bold, buccanier;
I am expatriated by this up-start king,

And his pretence is justice, flattering the mob;
He thus ascended his ambitious height,
And made them stepping stones to mount the throne;
But I am not deluded by this poor parade,
This ragged garment,---these politic snares,
But half conceal the naked bold intent.---
O! that I could ascend the blue, ætherial sky,
And mount that moon, I'd travel thro' her round,
And emulate great Jove to play th' tyrant.---
But here he comes,

Enter King Harold.

KING HAROLD.
My Brother!

TOSTIG.
Your exiled slave!

KING HAROLD.
Not slave, but equal as are all mankind,
All power is a trust, to work the public good,
Repell th' oppressor, nations to defend
To scourge the base, the robber, he whose right
Is that of strength, or skill in horrid war.
Love peace, my Brother! What I have is thine.

TOSTIG.
What bow,---receive from thee! The weak must beg,
For children cry, when nature craves for bread.

KING HAROLD.
Why should we war?

TOSTIG.
Because I'm wrong'd!

KING HAROLD.
Kings reign by justice, heav'ns best boon to man.
The sun cheers all, and earth her offsprings feed,
But when storms rage, they know not small or great,
All laws, obey for universal good!

TOSTIG.
Thus tyrants plead!

KING HAROLD.
Tostig!

TOSTIG.

When men speak truth, how soon the brother's lost,
As late it was, when banished from my home.
But fate now holds the scales, events must change;
The balance quivers, I rise, you sink to hell!

Gives a shrill whistle, and his guards appear.

TOSTIG continues.

O! How the mighty's fallen, crowns vanish oft,
Like visions which amuse us whilst we sleep;
Great, little Monarch bend thy knee, and crave pardon,
Call on thy people, who elected the *protector King*;
Thou mayest call, as when the ocean's in a calm,
Thou would'st call up a storm, from that great deep,
Still would it rest, as if in endless sleep.
Did'st thou not banish me? vessels now await,
To bear thee to some unknown, foreign clime,
And thou shalt be a Monarch, reign alone.---
Guards seize the tyrant!

Harold takes from his bosom a small silver horn, blows a signal and his guards appear.

KING HAROLD.

Ah! Traitor! Villain, boaster, knave!
O! That my father's blood should basely flow,
And animate an heart thus black with crime;
For thou art leagued with devils, or more fallen men,
To quench the light, that tyrants spurn and hate.—
Go; go! base man, I will not injure thee,
I on God's altar offer'd peace and love;
Yet with eyes glaring with infernal fire,
Thou would'st have pounced upon thy king,
For such I am—would not be such to thee.
Go; go! thy country's curse upon thy head,
Not mine!

Exeunt Omnes, except Harold.

KING HAROLD. *Solus.*

Where I a King, that could command on earth.
All war should cease, and discord hide her head;

No blood should flow to make my country blush,
Nor wolves or vultures feed on human flesh. [man ?
Whence springs this scourge, from heaven or from
Man's but the toy of circumstance and things;---
Poor man, he sees, and hears, and feels and thinks,
By force,---is moved to weep, to laugh, to grieve,
To play the knave, the tyrant, or the slave,---
For all combine to crush thy liberty,---O Man!
The fool, the priest, false patriot and king,
All rush to battle, mad with thirst of blood,
To raise a power from the shades of hell,
That sweeps the earth with pestilence and death.---
From whence come these, if goodness be supreme?

Exit.

END OF SCENE 2nd. ACT 4th.

ACT 4th. SCENE 3rd.

The Sea Shore Near Hastings.

Enter WILLIAM, MONK ROBERT with Knights.

DUKE WILLIAM.

Unfurl the banners, hoist the lion-flag,
We come to claim our own by peace or war;
The land of promise opens to our view,
The sword shall win the sceptre or a grave.

MONK ROBERT.

Soldiers, captains, faithful sons of Rome,
This is the land of hope, our future home,
The past is lost, the future prospect's bright,
Like morning's beams that break the gloom of night;
Before you glitter coronets and fame,
An empire, with a race of noble knights,
Unceasing wealth, unfading honours yours,
And victory invites you to the goal.

OSBERT.

Where is the foe? We've scour'd the fertile plain,
And nowhere found a soldier knight or king,
They've fled before the hounds like timid hares,

We'll hunt them down, and drive them from their lairs.
These are first offerings,—maidens, sparkling wine,
This gold,—a dozen boars as labouring serfs,
This pillage of a church, of heretics in faith,
All serve the brave, for brave men serve themselves.

MONK ROBERT.

As eagles stand upon the slaughtered lamb;
Or army o'er the fallen, ruin'd, town;
Where once the stately temple rear'd its doom,
With richest ornaments of art adorn'd,—
Or spacious mansions of the rich or great,
Excite the wonder of non-reasoning man,—
These mingled in one common fate of war,
Must teach these Briton's their expectant doom,
When terrors seize the frail, weak, human heart,
It is the sparrow caught by th' insatiate hawk,
Which trembles, struggles, pants, gives up its life.—
These men, did they resist just heaven's decree?
Pluck out an eye, and amputate a limb,
And send them to their herds, as stricken deer!

EUSTACE to the Prisoners, in derision.

Brave Saxons, hear from these your earthly doom,
And you fair maidens, with your blushing charms,
Come cease those tears, for Cupid bids you smile,
Let love and mirth your future hours beguile.

SAXON PRISONER.

Weep not for me but for your father-land,
For your own fate;—most gentle kind and fair;—
These men,—ah no, more base than man, may pluck
These globes of light from this frail human head,
And make this world, one dark and cheerless night;
But in this soul, there is a light which shines,
More brilliant where the tyrant* spreads his gloom;

* A tyrant is a man who has power over his fellow man, *either by his own will or from pretence of law*, to do what he pleases either with his person or property. And it makes no difference whether he brings that power into practice or not, if he holds it, he is, in fact, a tyrant.

There whilst life beats, shall love of freedom reign,
And hate of tyrants, curs'd of men and God.

THE SAXON'S DAUGHTER.

O! Father I would die for thee, would give these eyes,
And lose this arm, to save thee from thy doom,—
There brutal and inhuman despot, *Die!*

She stabs Eustace, who falls and expires.

ACT 4th, SCENE 4th.

A CAMP NEAR HASTINGS.

King Harold, Edgar the King's Brother, Eniglish Knights, Saxon and his Daughter, Herald.

ENTER KING HAROLD, EDGAR, AND KNIGHTS.

HAROLD.

As yond pale clifts resist the white surged waves,
When winds rage, furious, from the murky west,
Or northern breakers dash against their base,
And all their strength and rage is spent in vain,---
Thus must the Britons stand against their foes,
And hurl their vengeance, like that angel's wrath,
That slew the Assyrians in the days of old.

EDGAR.

These men weald weapons far more keen than steel,
The thunders of the church peel o'er the land,
And shake the faith of those who own you liege;
Then leave the hazards of this war to us,
Nor dare the vengeance of the Almighty arm,
Which wars with those, who fail their plighted faith.

ENGLISH KNIGHT.

Now war's red banner is again unfurl'd,
And man with man in deadly strife contends;
That awful oath that weighs upon your soul,
May sink you lowest, in our native land;
But whilst you live, the nation has a head,
But you no more,---it is a lifeless trunk,
And lays a prey to Norman wolves and dogs.

Enter Saxon's Daughter.

HAROLD.

Who comes here? what object greets my eyes?

A maid in sorrow, at her parents woes;
Weep not fair maiden! Though thy tears are pray'rs,
And may draw down just vengeance from above.
What shall my sword thus sleep, and our foes laugh,
And sport with human griefs as at a feast?
No; rather shall my body feed the worms,
If fortune, fickle dame, frown on my fate;
Enclose me in the prison's walls, or tomb,
Or these bones bleach before the winds of heav'n.

SAXON MAIDEN.

My liege, unless some special hand shall stay,
The ragged course of war, our native blood will flow,
And ruin spread like rivers that break down,
Their native bounds, in one resistless course;---
O! That I were a man, what I have done,
Should be but as the drop before the storm;
For British wrath should strike with lightening's force,
And shiver Norman hearts, as stubborn oaks
Are struck and withered by the pow'rs above.

HAROLD.

You would pursuade, that like a coward boy,
I hide myself within some castle walls;
But no, what duty prompts, I will obey;
What? Look idly on when threat'ning danger calls?
My kingdom must be safe, or I must die,
With grief, that others suffer I unschath'd
Why king, commander, first in state and rule?
If not the first when foes invade the land,
To guard my people from their murderous hand.

ENTER HERALD.

At Hastings has the enemy encamp'd,
And there unfurl their banners to the sky.

KING HAROLD,

Quick then and hasten with a godlike speed,
And summon all the men that can bear arms;
That we may scotch the serpent ere he sting,
And meet the bold invader ere he strike.
What shall he chain the lion in his den?

No; we would meet him, were he come from hell,
And hurl'd in living lava his fell darts.

HERALD.

False Monks, false priests, with traitorous intent,
Hold their allegiance forfeit,---pass'd to th' foe,
And hoist the hallow'd banner of the cross,
False to their king, their country and their God.

KING HAROLD.

Kings are but mortal men, and to rebel
May be to strangle, what gives most offence;
But to play false, betray our native land,
Is sin as black, as that pollutes the damn'd;
And were our foes belch'd from their dark abode,
From that infernal race that strikes at heav'n,
We'll meet them in the field and conquer.

Exeunt Omnes.

ACT 4th, SCENE 5th,

THE BATTLE FIELD OF HASTINGS.

Bishop Stigand; Alice with her Father the Saxon.

BISHOP STIGAND.

Yes; all is lost, the sun of England's set,
And set in clouds, that threaten future storms;
The plain is strew'd with many mighty dead,
And Harold lays amongst the mangled heaps,
The brave with th' brave in deadly cold embrace,
Deform the face of nature and infect the air,
And heaven's dews are stain'd with human blood.

THE SAXON BLIND.

How dark! yet o'er the nation's bleeding wounds,
I cannot weep, her eyes, as mine, are lost;
A nation without freedom, is as blind
And gropes her way, when freedom's sun is up,
As I amidst the spendeur of that orb.
Ah! could I weep, it would be o'er the grave
Of Harold, and of British liberty.
Yes; darkness is a blessing, I would not see,
My country and her sons, as bonded slaves,

Yoked as dull oxen to another's will!
O! death I court thy dark and cold embrace.
Thou last of ills and end of all that's good
In life, when all the free are sunk to serfs;---
O! wrap me in thy black mantle, Death,
That I and British freedom, may, entomb'd
In one dark vault, hide all our grief and shame.
How drear and cold has this frail world become!
Yet my soul glows with energy of thought,
The future beams with true prophetic light,
Like solar rays, when thunder peals on high,
Quick darting thro' the obscuring clouds of woe.
In time far distant Britons shall be free,
And hurl proud despots from their blood stain'd thrones;
And free shall live, and think and fight for fame,
All glorious on earth, victorious their name.

Enter Monk as Messenger.

MONK.

Good Bishop, I have seach'd, 'till mid-night hour,
For th' corse of him, we loved and served so well;
Each friend and foe has fought 'till life run out,
And are so cut and wounded by the sword,
That death has level'd and confounded all.

BISHOP STIGAND.

O shall he die without a tomb or pray'rs?

ALICE.

No; love has quicker sight than sordid pride,
Or blind ambition with its thousand crimes;
May heaven's anger strike that mortal dead,
That draws a sword to mount a gilded throne;---
There is a mark upon his hallow'd breast,
By which I can and will search out his corpse.

BISHOP STIGAND.

Ah! such is love, it fears not night or death,
Nor dead or dying,---the shy and timid maid,
When night adds terrors to the carnage field,
Will brave all dangers,---seek her lost one out,
And bathe his wounds in chastest tears of love.

How strange the ways of God to fallen man
When all that's virtuous, good and truly great,
Must fall before the cruel, base and false,
The vile exalted,---the murderous course of war,
Pollutes the hand, that a proud sceptre wealds.
Why should vain man, thus be the scourge of man,
And heaven foredoom a race to sweat and toil,
To guild a palace and exalt a knave?
If not,—an idiot, madman, fool, or slave?